



Recidivism of Juvenile Offenders

Fiscal Year 2007

Overview

During Fiscal Year 2007, Washington courts entered 11,573 juvenile dispositions¹. Approximately 79% of the offenders were boys and approximately 51% (5,936) of the dispositions involved offenders who had a history of one or more prior offenses². For purposes of this report, the term “recidivism” includes any disposition in which the offender’s juvenile history contains a disposition. The overall rate of recidivism for boys was 53% compared to 46% among girls (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographics

	Total Sentence	Recidivist	Recidivism rate	% of Juvenile population
Gender				
Female	2,418	1,101	45.53%	48.68%
Male	9,155	4,835	52.81%	51.32%
Race/Ethnicity³				
African Am.	1,769	1,020	57.66%	4.34%
Asian/Pacific Islander	327	151	46.18%	6.99%
Caucasian	9,910	4,013	50.73%	81.25%
Hispanic	792	426	53.79%	12.67%
Native American	504	280	55.56%	2.24%

¹ Juveniles adjudicated for criminal offenses receive a disposition rather than a sentence. The term disposition is used interchangeably with “sentence” in this report.

² The SGC database does not contain data relating to dates of release from confinement. As such, unlike some other studies, the length of time between convictions has not been factored into this report.

³ Race/Ethnicity was missing on 46 recidivists

African Americans account for 4.34% of the population in Washington and a disproportionately high 17.18% of all juvenile dispositions, yet had the highest recidivism rate of 57.66%. Asian/Pacific Islanders experienced the smallest recidivism rate, 46.18%. Caucasians, the largest segment of the general population, 81.25%, accounted for 67.6% of all juvenile dispositions and had a recidivism rate of 50.73%.

Asian/Pacific Islander girls received the smallest number of sentences; however, Caucasian girls accounted for the lowest overall recidivism rate, 49%. African American boys had the highest rate of recidivism, at 60% (See Figure 1 and Table 2).

Figure 1: Recidivism by Race and Gender

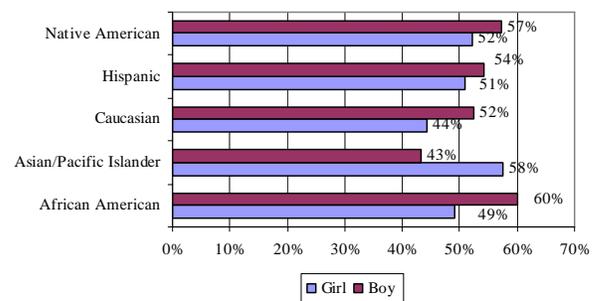
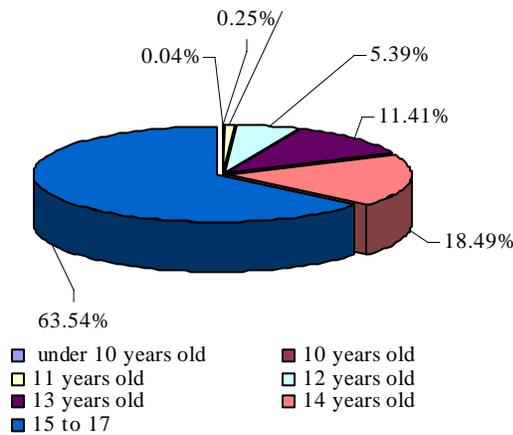


Table 2: Recidivism by Race and Gender

	Recidivist		Recidivism Rate	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
African American	195	825	49.12%	60.13%
Asian/Pacific Islander	38	113	57.58%	43.30%
Caucasian	717	3,296	44.34%	52.38%
Hispanic	53	373	50.96%	54.22%
Native American	85	195	52.15%	57.18%

During Fiscal Year 2007, there were 5,637 dispositions involving first time juvenile offenders. Most first time offenders were 15 to 17 years old. This age group accounted for 3,581 of the 5,637 first time offenders' cases (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Age at First Offense



The average age of first time offenders, 15.44 years old, was slightly lower than the average of repeat offenders, 16.19 years old. Girls tended to re-offend at a younger age, 16.14 years old, compared to boys at 16.20 years old. As was the case with first time offenders, the highest percentage of recidivism occurred among offenders between 15 to 17 years old (See Table 3).

Table 3: Age Range of Recidivists⁴

Age range	Total Sentence	Recidivist	Recidivism rate
under 10 years old	3	1	33.33%
10 years old	16	2	12.50%
11 years old	53	3	5.66%
12 years old	375	71	18.93%
13 years old	873	230	26.35%
14 years old	1,771	729	41.16%
15 to 17 years old	8,477	4,896	57.76%

⁴ Small numbers tend to produce unstable recidivism rates.

Offense Group

For purposes of this report, offenses are categorized into eleven primary groups: assault, drug, gross misdemeanor, manslaughter, misdemeanor, murder 1, murder 2, property, robbery, sex, and other felonies.

Nearly half of the first time offenders committed gross misdemeanors (Table 4). Property crimes were the second most common offenses committed by first-time offenders. These offenders rarely committed more serious offenses such as robbery and drug offenses.

Table 4: First Time Offender by Offense Group

Crime Type	First Time Offender	Percentage
Assault	304	5.39%
Drug	125	2.22%
Gross Misdemeanor	2,618	46.44%
Manslaughter	5	0.09%
Misdemeanor	1,041	18.47%
Murder 1	1	0.02%
Other Felony	100	1.77%
Property	1,169	20.74%
Robbery	83	1.47%
Sex	191	3.39%

Unlike the pattern of first offenses, the most frequent prior offenses were drug, misdemeanors and robbery, followed by assault offenses (Table 5).

Table 5: Recidivism by Type of Offense

Crime Type	Total Sentence	Recidivist	Recidivism rate
Assault	619	315	50.89%
Drug	309	184	59.55%
Gross Misdemeanor	5,218	2,600	49.83%
Manslaughter	7	2	28.57%
Misdemeanor	2,438	1,397	57.30%
Other Felony	242	142	58.68%
Property	2,314	1,145	49.48%
Robbery	177	94	53.11%
Sex	248	57	22.98%

This offense pattern was the same among boy and girl offenders (Table 6).

Table 6: Recidivism by Gender and Type of Offense.

Crime	Recidivism		Recidivism percentage	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Assault	42	310	3.58%	5.63%
Drug	44	154	3.75%	2.80%
Gross Misdemeanor	582	2,258	49.57%	41.02%
Manslaughter		2	0.00%	0.04%
Misdemeanor	339	1,440	28.88%	26.16%
Other Felony	18	165	1.53%	3.00%
Property	133	1,036	11.33%	18.82%
Robbery	10	87	0.85%	1.58%
Sex	6	52	0.51%	0.94%

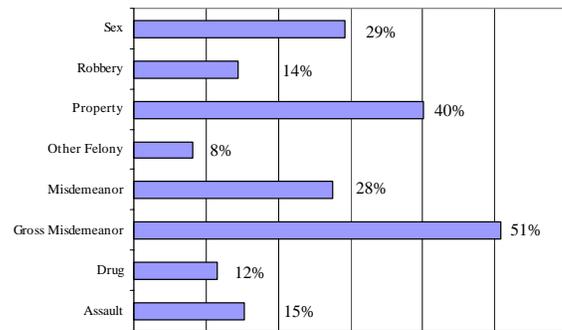
As expected, the lowest recidivism rates were found among the more serious offenses such as manslaughter and sex crimes. These offenses were committed at the lowest overall rates of current and past offenses (Table 7).

Table 7: Present and Past Sentences by Recidivists

Crime Type	Present Offense	Present Percentage	Prior Offense	Prior Percentage
Assault	352	5.27%	430	5.99%
Drug	198	2.96%	152	2.12%
Gross Misdemeanor	2,840	42.53%	2,925	40.72%
Misdemeanor	2	0.03%		
Manslaughter	1,779	26.64%	1,321	18.39%
Other Felony	183	2.74%	323	4.50%
Property	1,169	17.51%	1,757	24.46%
Robbery	97	1.45%	141	1.96%
Sex	58	0.87%	134	1.87%

A subset of recidivists includes a group of offenders whose current criminal behavior was the same type as that committed at least once in the past. These offenders are sometimes referred to as habitual offenders, though state statues generally apply this term to persons who are repeatedly arrested for any criminal behavior.

Figure 3: Same Criminal Conduct Offense Group



As illustrated by figure 3, youths whose current offenses fell within misdemeanor and property crime types were extremely likely to have engaged in the same criminal conduct. In the past, sex offenders were the next most likely habitual offenders. Drug recidivists were found to be the least likely habitual offenders.

Table 8: Violent Offenses

Current offense	Prior offense		
	Non-Violent	Violent	Serious Violent
Non-Violent	5,538	223	4
Violent	157	13	
Serious Violent	1		

Most of the 11,573 sentences entered in Fiscal Year 2007 involved non-violent offenses. Similarly, most recidivists, 5,538, were non-violent offenders who had also committed non-violent offenses in the past. There was no juvenile who had previous serious violent offenses committed serious violent offense during Fiscal year 2007 (Table 8).

Recidivism as Adult Offenders

During Fiscal Year 2007, of the 29,196 adult sentences, 4,674 of those offenders had a history of juvenile offenses. There were 1,353 adult offenders whose history consisted of only juvenile offenses.

In some instances adult criminal courts have original jurisdiction over certain violent criminal offenses committed by juveniles who are 16 or 17 years old. Some crimes result in an “automatic decline” to adult court. In Fiscal Year 2007 there were approximately 38 juveniles automatically declined to adult court.

In addition, adult criminal courts are authorized to assert jurisdiction over juveniles when the juvenile court exercises its discretion to decline jurisdiction. The SGC identified 37 possible discretionary declines in Fiscal Year 2007.

Because cases involving youths tried as adults are not processed in juvenile courts, information about the disposition of those cases and the prior histories of the offenders are not contained in the Sentencing Guidelines Commission’s juvenile database and are not included in this report.

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Data

The juvenile disposition data contained in this report was collected from Washington Disposition forms sent to the Sentencing Guidelines Commission (SGC) by the courts and includes all juvenile dispositions known to have been imposed between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2007 (Fiscal Year 2007). Data elements entered into the SGC database and used in this report include race, ethnicity, gender, and type of sentence, current offense, offense history, offender score, the imposed confinement term and community supervision term.

Comments or questions may be directed to:

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